

VZCZCXRO6544
RR RUEHMA RUEHPA
DE RUEHNM #0639 1821342
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 301342Z JUN 08
FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4399
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHLMC/MCC WASHDC
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0701

UNCLAS NIAMEY 000639

DEPT FOR AF/W DENNISON, AF/RSA HARPOLE AND AF/PDPA LISENBY

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [KCOR](#) [KPAO](#) [NG](#)
SUBJECT: Private Television Station Warned

Ref: Niamey 632

¶1. On June 26 the private radio and television station Dounia broadcast footage of a demonstration which occurred at Niger's High Court of Justice as police forces took former Prime Minister Hama Amadou from the courthouse to prison (Reftel). The video showed police using teargas and batons to disperse the crowd after members of the crowd reportedly tried to block the exit of the police escorting the former Prime Minister from the courthouse to prison.

¶2. On June 28 the High Council for Communication (CSC), the government organization charged with regulation of the media, called on Dounia to self-censor their reporting in the interest of "national unity" and patriotism. The CSC warned Dounia that it would revoke their license if they ever broadcast any type of footage or announcement which could provoke instability. Dounia announced on the air that they had received this letter, which led other media outlets, civil society associations and NGOs to complain about government interference. The CSC sent a separate letter to all of Niger's television and radio stations telling them to be very careful with the treatment of information in order to avoid legal sanctions.

¶3. The constitution provides for freedom of speech and of the press; however, the government has routinely restricted these rights through media bans and by intimidating journalists into practicing self-censorship. For example, for more than a year, the government has restricted reporting on events related to the ongoing unrest in the north of the country.

ALLEN